



香港藥學服務基金

The Hong Kong Pharmaceutical Care Foundation

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**Secretary for Food and Health
Food and Health Bureau
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Date: 9th June 2008

“Your Health, Your Life”

Healthcare Reform Consultation

We represent the Pharmaceutical Care Foundation Hong Kong, which is a non-profit making, charitable organization formed in 2007 by a group of committed pharmacists from hospitals, clinics, academic, community, industrial and trading sectors. (Our website: www.pcfhk.org)

With reference to the Healthcare Reform Consultation Document, we have the following comments and suggestions on the proposed five areas for better healthcare protection:

1. Promote health in partnership with healthcare professionals:

We agree that primary healthcare service quality should be improved with a full range of standard models of preventive care service that are to be provided by a team of health care professionals. The family doctors concept is good but

doctors cannot fight the battle alone in providing preventive care service for the population and still meet the full requirement for providing primary care treatment to patients in the community. And the team or any team of health care professionals is made up of not just doctors. Further thoughts should be given to the role of all allied health professionals e.g. pharmacists, dietitians, medical technologists, at the primary and/or preventive healthcare level. In this submission of ours, we would focus primarily on the role of community pharmacists at the primary healthcare level.

We strongly recommend that outside the public hospital/clinic setting, the Government should make full use of the untapped expert resources of the 500+ community pharmacists who are trained professionals in the use of drugs. These pharmacists, working in dispensaries/pharmacies located throughout Hong Kong, provide a network of readily accessible points where the general public can get advice on health and treatment options if so directed. In the UK, pharmacists have been enlisted to play a significant and multi-facet role at primary healthcare level to help curb ever-increasing national medical expenditure and reduce the demand for medical consultations with doctors. Pharmacists are allowed limited prescribing authorities, oversee special clinics to help monitor drug therapy for gravely or chronically ill, diabetic or hypertensive patients. The HKSAR Government may like to refer to the experience of such country in its bid to work with allied healthcare professionals at primary healthcare level. It should recognise the professional expertise of community pharmacists, and consider how best to make use of this available pool of resources and publicise the roles of community pharmacists in the primary care service.

The Bureau should lead and coordinate with all health professionals to compile registers for family doctors as well as for allied health professionals so that any provision of primary care services in the community for the patients could be monitored and seen as fair and transparent.

2. Develop an electronic database of patient records:

We appreciate the Government's leading role to develop the e-Health Record for the people in Hong Kong.

But we must emphasise that drug treatment is an essential component of health care. Apart from receiving drugs from public hospitals and clinics where there is

an established system of electronic patient records, the patients will get medications from other sources. We are fully aware that there is now a lack of systems in the private sector as well as in the community to exchange and share the information collated by the public hospitals/clinics on the drugs used by the patients.

We strongly recommend that the development of a system basing on the **concept of “records to follow the patients”** so that there is a mechanism to exchange and share information including the patients’ drug / medication profiles by the private / community sectors with the public hospital system.

You may wish to be informed that our Foundation has developed a secured web based platform with functions to reconcile drugs obtained from different sources of supply in both the public and private sectors so that potential drug incidents such as drug overdoses, drug duplications, drug /drug side effects and interactions leading to hospitalisation could be prevented. Our Foundation would welcome and encourage allied health professionals and pharmaceutical care service providers to utilise this common platform with a view to communicating effectively and promoting healthier lifestyles in the community to meet the growing healthcare needs of the Hong Kong population.

3. Strengthen public healthcare safety net:

We agree that the public healthcare safety net must be strengthened so that ALL patients with catastrophic and chronic illnesses should receive adequate treatments and appropriate drugs without having to fulfil certain pre-qualifying conditions, such as by exhausting their savings before receiving the non-standard healthcare treatments.

We strongly recommend that a mechanism must be put in place on the management of the public healthcare safety net such as audit commission, so that separate entities can monitor fairly and assess objectively the performance of the health care services and give advice to service providers to improve further the prevailing health care standard and eliminate any inadequacy of health care performance in order to make the healthcare safety net more accountable and transparent.

4. Encourage public private partnership:

We are glad to see that the Government has recognised the need for and the importance of public private partnership. We are of the view that the Bureau should take the lead to set up **future medical centres of excellence** by adopting a multi-disciplinary and holistic approach to include all allied health professionals who can assume the primary care gatekeeper roles. Medical practitioners from the public and private sectors and experienced local/overseas experts can work closely in collaboration with pharmacists, nurses, dietitians, social workers and physiotherapists to nurture and maintain healthier lifestyles among the general public thereby help prevent ill health and curb rising medical expenditure.

We strongly urge the Government to place high emphasis on primary health education, which is another key to success in preventive healthcare management in the community. The Government should take active steps to lead the team of allied health professionals who can educate patients in health management aspects and empower our patients with knowledge in the management of their own health. It has been proven that empowered patients would be more compliant with their treatment therapies, enjoy better clinical outcomes, and lead higher quality lives.

5. Develop supplementary financing options for healthcare:

There is an apparent lack in the consultation paper on the clear definition of the Primary Care Structure and Practice in the community, the future Preventive Healthcare Delivery Model, and the potential members/numbers of stakeholders involved in the Health Care Reform.

We must point out that there are plenty of room for improvements in the private health sector in terms of changes in work behaviour and the service delivery models to pave the way for the Health Care Reform. However, the consultation paper lacks details on **How and What the Bureau will do** in the private sector or how to work with it, apart from promoting family health practice so that allied health professionals could become real/true partners to achieving the **“patients’ focus of care”** situation in the future Health Care Reform.

In submitting our views, we hope that the Government should not overlook the existing pool of allied healthcare professionals in the private sector other than medical doctors, in particular, community pharmacists, and consider how best to involve them in the hierarchy of health care services at primary and/or higher levels in its attempt to reform the entire healthcare in order to achieve holistic, sustainable healthcare for future generations in a cost-effective and efficient manner.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Chung', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

Mr Chung Wing Ming, Billy

The Chief Operating Officer